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TAGS: PGOV PTER SOCI SCUL ECON IZ
SUBJECT: BAGHDAD EPRT: OMAR AL-JABOORI ON SUNNI
RECONCILIATION, LOCAL ELECTIONS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2670
B. BAGHDAD 3013

Classified By: E-PRT Leader Eric Whitaker, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (U) This is a Baghdad 2 BCT E-PRT reporting cable.

¶12. (C) Summary: Omar Al-Jaboori, Human Rights Advisor to the Vice President, told E-PRT Team Leader September 11 that Shia assistance to Sunnis fighting Al Qaeda in Iraq forms the essence of reconciliation. As part of an on-going discussion about local reconciliation efforts in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad (reftels A - B), Al-Jaboori brought with him representatives from six neighborhoods. Representatives from these neighborhoods discussed significant recent developments, including the continuing, pernicious influence of militants. Al-Jaboori also said that Sunnis will compete in the next round of provincial elections, though he complained about the under-representation of Sunnis on 9 Nissan's Neighborhood Councils and its District Council. End summary.

RECONCILIATION IS SHIA FIGHTING WITH SUNNIS AGAINST AQI

¶13. (C) When asked to define reconciliation, Omar Al-Jaboori, Human Rights Advisor to the President, told Baghdad E-PRT Team Leader on September 11 that Sunni and Shia had interacted peacefully in the past - through marriages, friends, and school - without distinguishing between sects. Even his tribe, the Jaboori, he said, has members from both backgrounds. Both Sunni and Shia are disappointed with the way things are turning out; the Shia government had been imposed by outside forces, bringing with it negativism. Al-Jaboori, who is Sunni, argued that Shia did not experience Saddam Hussein's fury alone) it was equally dispersed amongst Iraqis of all sects. During the discussion, Al-Jaboori took a series of calls on his cell phone pertaining to an ongoing, three-hour battle in the Doura neighborhood of Rashid district which he said involved a three-front attack by Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) on Sunnis, and which included women and children among the victims. Al-Jaboori said that local Shia were fighting alongside Sunnis and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) without the assistance of Coalition Forces (CF). The Shia assistance, he said, is reconciliation.

SUNNIS WILL PARTICIPATE IN PROVINCIAL/LOCAL ELECTIONS

¶14. (C) Al-Jaboori said that Sunnis will compete in the next round of provincial elections. Al-Jaboori said that he will help to mobilize Sunni sheikhs at the local level to form their own political movements to run for seats. Noting that Sunni sections of many neighborhoods did not receive adequate

representation in neighborhood councils, he also said that Shia-dominated District Councils often exclude representatives from Sunni neighborhoods. Whitaker mentioned three neighborhood elections that took place in eastern Baghdad in June, during which at least one Sunni was elected.

E-PRT Team Leader suggested that Al-Jaboori work with the District Council to push for elections when vacancies occurred; he encouraged Al-Jaboori to find qualified candidates and to help them develop a platform, campaign, and encourage supporters to vote. Iraqis have no problem with democracy, Al-Jabouri stressed; they seek the election of people based on the areas they represent, rather than from party lists. True Iraqis will come forward, he claimed, not those influenced by "Persia." Iraq needs a prime minister for all of the people, he added.

SADR SEEKS TO MAKE SPLINTER GROUPS EASY TARGETS FOR CF

¶ 15. (C) Al Jaboori said that conflict between Badr and JAM is inevitable, and is not over principles. Instead, he sees serious divisions between the two groups. JAM is challenged by splinter groups, he said, especially in Baghdad, and there are major divisions within the movement. Sadr wants to make splinter groups easy targets for Coalition Forces, he said. Al-Jaboori hopes that the JAM cessation of hostilities is sincere, and believes that Iraqis should take advantage of the opportunity for stability. He concurred that Iraq needed its technocrats to return to their former positions. He met with the Minister of Migration and Displaced Persons, and is engaging in efforts to get them to return.

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LOCAL RECONCILIATION EFFORTS CONTINUE IN 9 NISSAN

¶ 16. (C) In the Zafaraniya neighborhood of 9 Nissan district, the poverty of the area gave rise to militants, the local representative said, whom he claimed had infiltrated the 9th Division of the Iraqi Police (IP). The representative described the area as Sunni and Christian in the past. The government gave land there to the poor through land grants. Al-Jabouri described an allegedly typical situation in which JAM ransacked a Sunni home, but the Sunni police proved unable to solve the crime. In another example of their ineptitude, Al-Jabouri said, the local IP arrested an Imam with his four guards. Despite their vindication, he claimed, they had to pay a \$5,000 bribe to earn their release.

¶ 17. (C) In the Al Fadhil neighborhood, the local representative asked for a role in hiring mosque guards. Also, he complained that contractors for essential services do not pay their workers well, and make very large profits. The Zayuna representative said that the locals need more police patrols, since militants are asking shopkeepers for money. He also mentioned that CF have trained Iraqi Security Forces, and that CF intend to provide a generator on "Restaurant Row."

¶ 18. (C) Local representatives said that gasoline stations still serve as major revenue sources for militants in the Obaidy and Beladiyat neighborhoods. Militants also have other ways of raising money, he added, such as extortion. As the locals know the identity of many militants, the latter have taken to using children to collect money from store owners to avoid the risk of being captured. The representative also raised complaints about JAM families squatting in Sunni mosques. JAM members hold meetings in one mosque's library.

¶ 19. (C) In the Palestinian area of Beladiyat, the local representative reported, water has been tankered in, and plastic bags were ordered for a neighborhood cleaning project. On the day of the water delivery, however,

uniformed "public order" ISF or JAM visited the compound, and searched some areas. People remain unsure whether or not they were legitimate security forces, the representative said.

¶10. (C) The Mashtal neighborhood representative blamed poor public services on local militias. He raised concerns about the possibility of the National Police facilitating JAM operations. He also said that Iraqis from outside the neighborhood have been moved into an area of an old air force base and installed security walls around it.

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